

ASH TREES
SURGERY

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

December 2024

Message from Ash Trees Surgery

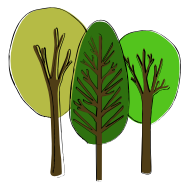
We are writing to inform you of some changes in the operation at Ash Trees Surgery and explain some of the challenges we face. We always endeavour to provide the best possible care to you, but this can be difficult at times.

Over the past decade, general practice across England has faced increasing pressure.

It is a startling fact that now only 5.5% of the NHS budget is provided to GP surgeries (it used to be 11%) when we deal with 90% of daily patient contacts. We undertake over 1.5 million appointments per day in general practice in England.

We receive just 31p per patient per day to offer you our core GP services at the surgery.

At Ash Trees Surgery, we have done everything we can to face these challenges to improve the quantity and quality of patient care.



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In response:

- we have extended appointment duration from 10 to 15 minutes to give each patient the attention they need and deserve;

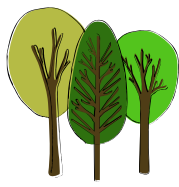
- in addition to appointments, we manage a large volume of medical communication, including repeat prescriptions orders requiring a designated clinical team to manage this and another team to review the clinical documents e.g. clinic reports from hospitals and other agencies.

This essential behind-the-scenes work requires 8 hours of GP time each day;

- we have embraced modern technology so that we make a huge amount of contact by text and email which adds to the provision as in the past these contacts would have been needed a personal discussion or appointment;

- we will be introducing a new digital telephone service that will streamline the way you contact the surgery and make it easier for you to get through to us and get automated call-backs

- the surgery is a training practice to help develop our future doctors, nurses and wider team members, something we feel is essential if we are to contribute to preserving the NHS.



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As a profession we are concerned that despite making changes within our surgeries, and significantly working beyond our contracted hours, it is becoming harder to ensure an excellent service for our patients.

The result of all the above is that in recent months, GP surgeries **nationally** voted to support collective action. **This is not strike action**, but is a way to send a clear message to our politicians that general practice in its current form is really struggling. The BMA has suggested that practices take steps to ensure safe working conditions, including limiting GPs to seeing no more than the recommended 25 patients per day. These appointments can be face to face or telephone consultations. When GPs regularly see more than 25 patients per day, this increases doctor burnout, impacts the quality of care and simply compounds the problem of doctor recruitment and retention.

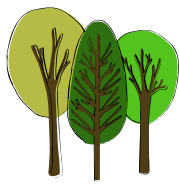
You can find out more patient information from the BMA [here](#).

Across the country we see private GP surgeries popping up and there is a real risk this could become more widespread and we see NHS general practice much like NHS dentistry – few and far between and a very unequal service where you get rapid access to care if you have the funds to do this.

You can ring Ash Trees Surgery from 8am each working day to seek help from us. For these same day/urgent problems we offer well over 100 appointments each day, on top of the hundreds of routine and pre-bookable appointments we have each day as well.

Once we reach the limit of calls and have used up all our appointments per day, we will no longer be able to offer same day appointments that day and may offer you some other advice.

We will still maintain a service for those patients who urgently need our help whereas others may be directed to alternative services.



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Patients may already have noticed that our reception staff, where appropriate, indicate the range of health care providers available.

This is one of the reasons why our reception staff ask the reason for your appointment - to help navigate you to appropriate care which may not always be the GP. We have decided to enhance this provision so that patients can be reassured that help will be available. Such alternatives could be self-directed care, NHS 111, the Urgent Treatment Centre at Westmorland General Hospital, NHS Dental services, Accident & Emergency services and NHS England Pharmacy First (a relatively new service offered by local pharmacies which can offer help, advice and medication for minor ailments for patients).

We hope to have your understanding and support during these challenging times.

As indicated, please be reassured that we are not acting alone; all GP surgeries across England are facing the same pressure and will be taking some form of collective action. It is only by standing together that we can aim to make a strong case to the government for the changes needed to improve general practice for both patients, doctors and all practice staff.

If you wish to email us about any aspect of this message, then please use this email address to contact us - ats.collectiveaction@nhs.net

Thank you for your understanding on these issues.

The partners at Ash Trees Surgery

Did you know...

The Government gives this practice just £112.50 a year for each patient, whatever their health needs. That's less than the cost of a TV licence.


This means we're only given 31p a day for every patient registered with us – less than the cost of an apple.



31p

GPs want the same things that you do.

We believe nobody should struggle to see their family doctor.



We believe general practice deserves a **bigger slice** of NHS funding so we can train and hire more GPs, deliver the services you require and make it easier to get appointments to see your GP and practice team.

We know you deserve better than this. GPs Are On Your Side.

bma.org.uk/GPsOnYourSide